Foreign Secretary's visit to South American Countries

*223. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD:†

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Foreign Secretary was sent in June this year on a special mission to certain South American countries to apprise them of India's proposals for a three-stage nuclear disarmament programme and to secure their support to this programme; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and their outcome?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) The Foreign Secretary's visit to Peru and Argentina was undertaken in the context of the forthcoming meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Nonaligned countries, scheduled in Nicosia in September. However he took the opportunity also to brief the Governments of Peru and Argentina on India's disarmament proposals.

(b) The Governments concerened noted the proposals with interest and these are receiving their consideration.

SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Sir, the three-stage nuclear disarmament programme is a wonderful and it is for the first time that such a concrete and practical proposal has been put forward by any country in the world. We are proud that India is the father of this proposal. Its success will enhance India's prestige in the world arena. Hence, India should do every possible thing for its success. Therefore, Sir, many, I know if there is any proposal from India to get this three-stage nuclear disarmament programme passed in the forthcoming meeting of Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries scheduled to be held in Nicosia in September this year?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Sir, firstly I would like to thank the honourable Member for the praise that he has showered on the action plan that was presented by the Prime Minister to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, SSOD—3. It has received very wide acclamation because it was during the SSOD-3, the only concrete, detailed and wide-ranging plan put before the world body on nuclear and conventional disarmament over the next 22 years. With regard to the meeting that is to be held in Nicosia in September, we will certainly make sure that this particular item is included and discussed, I am confident that it will receive the support and commendation of the majority of members who will attend the meeting... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Sir, our honourable Prime Minister made a brilliant advocacy of nuclear disarmament in the UNO this year. Subsequently, the President of India visited the USSR and Mongolia. The Prime Minister also visited serveral other countries after his UNO visit. Therefore, may I know whether the three-stage nuclear disarmament programme was also discussed in these countries viited by the President and the Prime Minister and, if so, what were the contents and results of the discussions?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Sir, as far as the visits of the Prime Minister to the countries that he made during the last two months are concerned, yes, the action plan was not only discussed by the Prime Minister with his counterparts, but his counterparts welcomed the action plan. These countries range from those who are members of the EEC and belong to the Eastern European segment, and one of them shares the landmass both of Asia and Europe, Turkey, is also a member of NATO. In all these countries there was very great interest in the action plan presented by the Prime Minister. I would respectfully submit that as far as the Government is concerned, we would be very glad to have a discussion in the House on the action plan

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Mahendra Prasad.

presented by the Prime Minister to the United Nations and I think all Members of the House would find it worth while. I am volunteering a discussion on this particular matter even before some Members suggest it. With regard to the visit of he President, the subject, I am sure, came up, but you will appreciate that discussions held by the President with his counterparts are, of necessity, of a confidential nature and I would not like to comment on them.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Sir, to beign with, I welcome the statement just now made by the honourable Minister volunteering a discussion on his particular subject The question of disarmament is a very important issue today and this is directly related to the process of peace and also development in our part of the world and in those countries where the developmental process has still not attained that level which is witnessed in the developed countries. The Action Plan presented by the Prime Minister to the UN Special Session on Disarmament is not only in conformity with India's principles and faith in peace, but it also provides a practical ad sound basis for nuclear disarmament. I am sure there is complete unanimity in supporting this Action Plan in our country, which has been welcomed by a large number of countries as we were informed now by the Minister.

My question to the hon. Minister is, which are the countries who have specifically come out in support of this Action Plan on Disarmament? Secondly, what further follow-up is being contemplated by the Ministry of External Affairs to mobilise support and also to ensure that the entire world accepts it soon?

SHRI K NATWAR SINGH: I am grateful to the hon Member for the question that he has asked. In reply to his first question I may inform him that as far as I am aware, nobody is against this Plan. (*Interruptions*) And even those countries which might normally not agree with us on a number of issues, have not come out against the Plan. They have not said that they are not in favour of it.

With regard to the favourable response, a very large number of countries have responded and evidence of it was available when after the Prime Minister concluded his speech in the General Assembly—and I was present there—a very large number of delegations came and thanked him. This in itself was quite extraordinary. There was no delegation which had reservations. We know, for example, the six countries have welcomed it; the countries which the Prime Minister visited during the last two months have all welcomed it. Response we have got at the official level is encouraging. The feedback have got shows that there is a very great support for it. I sincerely hope at the Nicosia meeting where the Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries will be meeting together, we will get further evidence of this. This Plan has been given by our Embassises and Missions to all Government to which they are accredited. We are very encouraged with the response that the Plan has received.

I might also mention that the salient point the Action Plan makes is that while we welcome the initiative taken by the two Super-powers with regard to nuclear disarmament, we also feel that it is not a monopoly of any two countries howsoever great and powerful they may be and that the rest of the world is very much interested in it. That is why India has taken the initiative. This is a global matter on which all countries are concerned and that it is not a particular preserve of any group of countries.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: My first question is, what is the reaction of the two super-powers to these three proposals? Secondly, the hon. Minister says that nobody is opposed to it. May I know what steps have been taken by you to energise this response so that this Plan could be implemented?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: The question of energising comes up only if there is slackening. There is no slackening. We are active all the time. Certainly the Soviet Union has welcomed it. With regard to the United States of America, there has been a thundering silence.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: This Action Plan for Disarmament is a very serious

issue. We are discussing it in the Question Hour, but I propose that a thorough and serious discussion on this issue should take place in Parliament also.

Now, I am putting my question about the Action Plan. The countries which possess the nuclear weapons are more relevant in their response to the Action Plan. Now, apart from other countries the two main countries in today's world possess most of the nuclear weapons, that is, Soviet Union and the United States of America. May I know from the Minister what are the specific reactions of the Soviet Union as well as the United States of America to this Action Plan of the Government of India?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Sir, a moment ago, I answered this particular question saying that the Soviet Union has welcomed it and the response of the United States of America has been thundurous silence.

SHRI ARANGIL SREEDHARAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, total disarmament of all nations in the world was the dream of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. We pay glowing tributes to him but his message is not carried to these countries where there are feverish activities for armaments. But the people of those countries, I know, are for disarmament whether they are in the United States or in the Soviet Union. May I know from the Minister what steps this Government has taken to convey the message of Mahatma Gandhi on disarmament to the people of these two super powers?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Festivals of India.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Well, Sir, I will refresh the hon. Member's memory. (1) In 1986 Mr. Gorbachev visited India. The world-famous Delhi Declaration was adopted. Read the 10 clauses, I think, it is clause number 5 which says that non-violence should be the principal objective of man-kind and a way of life.

I think it was for the first time that a leader of a Marxist-Leninist Government has put his signature to a document which mentions non-violence as a way of life. It is a singular achievement.

Now, with regard to the views of Mahatma Gandhi being known in the world, I don't think Mahatma Gandhi or his memory needs PR men to put forward his great teachings.

SHRI ARANGIL SREEDHARAN: It is a question of message of non-violence. It is not a question of PR men. It is a question of conveying Mahatma Gandhi's message to the people of the world. It is not merely PR activities. A number of Indian organisations are working there. May I know from the Minister whether the Government have contacted any of those Indian organisations working in the United States for the spread of message of Mahatama Gandhi? I know that Mahatma Gandhi is much bigger than PR men.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Since 15th August, 1947, I think since Gandhi ji came on the national scene after his return from South Africa, where he spent 21 years, in 1914, this country, this Government has done nothing else but put before the world the great teachings and the values that Mahatma Gandhi put before this country and the world. This is what we have been doing all along.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Gandhi ji is never known to you, Mr. Natwar Singh... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DEBA PRASAD RAY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as you know, peace and freedom are two indivisible concepts. That is why I want to know from the hon. Minister for External Affairs, while mobilising the support of the South American Countries in favour of nuclear disarmament Action Plan, whether the Government also propose to extend more active support to El Salvador and Guatemala in the same continent who have been fighting for liberation for quite some time?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Sir, the hon. Member has, if I may respectfully say so, has stretched the scope of this question. I would be grateful if some precision and intellectual discipline is injected into the discussion.

Idukki and Periyar Dams

*224. SHRI T. R. BALU:†

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will he Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of water in Idukki and Periyar Dams as on date;

(b) whether it is a fact that both the dams lie in quoke prone areas; whether these dams have been designed to withstand quakes; if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of earth quakes that took place during the recent past in this area and the details thereof; and

(d) the extent of damage caused in this area as a result of these quakes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI): (a) As on 3-8-1988 quantity of water in Idukki Dam was 810 Million Cubic Metres and in Periyar Dam 201 Million Cubic Metres.

(b) Yes, Sir. Idukki Dam has been designed to withstand seismic activity. Similar provision has been made in the strengthening measures of Periyar Dam.

(c) and (d) In all, four mild earthquakes occurred in June, 1988; two on 7th June, one on 8th June and one on 21st June, but no damage to the dams has been reported.

SHRI T. R. BALU: Sir, I would like to know whether there is any threat to the Periyar Dam due to this earthquake. Further, I would like to draw the attention of this House about the bandh observed by Peermedu people along with 40,000 plantation workers. In such state of affairs, I want to know whether the Government have taken any proper steps to avoid any future damage to the dam. In order to allay the fears of the people, has the Government taken any appropriate steps?

श्रीमती कृष्णा साही : सभापति महोदय, यह दोनों डेम भूकम्प प्रबंध क्षेत्र में हैं। जोनल मानचित्र के अनुसार तीसरी जोन में पडता है और सारे हिन्दुस्तान को पांच क्षेत्रों में भूकम्प की दृष्टि से बांटा गया है। तो यह मध्यम क्षेणी में आता है।

This region is prone to occurrence of earthquakes but of the moderate intensity.

और आपने क्या पूछा था फिर से दोहरा दीजिए . . . (व्यवधान)

SHRI T. R. BALU: Sir, during the Question Hour, the Minister has to answer in English when the question is asked in English. ...(*Interruption*)....

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Sir, if the Minister knows English, she should reply in English.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Both the languages are permitted and that is why, translation facility is provided. You see, the Question Hour time is very important. Please don't waste time. ....(*Interruption*)....

Are you not interested in supplementary?

SHRI T. R. BALU: My second supplementary is, do the earthquakes take place due to the tapping of the ground water source? If so, what are the steps taken by the Government to remedy the situation?

SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI: Sir, it is not concerned with earthquakes.

माननीय सदस्य ने जो प्रश्न किया है, उसके अनुसार आप यह जानना चाहते है कि इडक्की और पेरियार बांधों में जल

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri T.R. Balu.